



Istituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice
Salesiane di Don Bosco
S. Thomas Apostle Province - INM
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Provincial Circular

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Viva Gesù!

"As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart". - (Lk.2:19)

My Dearest Sisters,

Wish you a very happy and grace-filled New Year 2020!

On the very first day of the year, the Church celebrates the solemnity of **Mary Mother of God**, a title given to the Virgin Mary during the Council of Ephesus in 431, entrusting the entire year to the motherly care of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Pope Francis says that the love of the mothers is the foundation of humanity and the cure for a world often divided and filled with bitterness. He praises mothers for the "heroism" they show in self-giving, strength in compassion, wisdom in meekness and for the loving accompaniment of their children. A world that looks to the future without a mother's gaze is shortsighted. It may well increase its profits but it will no longer see others as brothers and sisters. He is indeed amazed by the Mother of God who was deeply united with her son Jesus and journeyed with Him throughout His life on earth and beyond with her admirable motherly qualities. He recommends us to ask Mary for "the grace to be amazed at the God of surprises" as 2020 gets started. May she bless the path of every man and woman in this year that is just beginning. It will be good precisely in the measure in which each person welcomes God's goodness which Jesus came to bring into the world. This blessing is what gives meaning to all of the greetings exchanged at the beginning of the New Year. Let us pay heed to the exhortation of our holy foundress St. Mary Domenica Mazzarello in her conference at the end of 1880: **"Let us be genuine Sisters and let the New Year be for all one of new life"**

This day also marks the celebration of the **53rd World Day of Peace** which focuses on the theme **"Peace as a Journey of Hope: Dialogue, Reconciliation and Ecological Conversion"**. Peace is a journey of hope in the face of obstacles and trials. The national and international conflicts often aggravated by ruthless acts of violence have an enduring effect on the body and soul of humanity. Every war is a form of fratricide that destroys the human family's innate vocation to a brotherhood. Our present context in which uniformity is exalted and diversity is seen as a menace, where domination is born of selfishness and pride and hatred and vengeance prevail, the Vicar of Christ recommends that we undertake a journey of listening based on memory, solidarity and fraternity; of reconciliation in fraternal communion and of ecological conversion. As followers of Christ, we need to keep our gaze fixed on Jesus who reconciled "all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross" (Col 1:20). It requires us to set aside every act of violence in thought, word and deed, whether against our neighbours or against God's creation. May all men and women who come into this world experience a life of peace and bring to full maturity the promise of life and love dwelling in their heart.

Let us continue to journey with our Holy Father Pope Francis through the course of this new year too as we reflect on Chapter IV of **Christus Vivit**, in which he shares **"A Great**

message for all young people” highlighting the **three great truths** that all of us need to listen constantly.

The **first truth** that the Pope wishes to tell each and every young person is “**God is love, God loves you**”. It does not matter who they are or what has happened in their lives in the past. The truth is, “At every moment, you are infinitely loved” (CV 112). The Pope tells them with absolute confidence that they can find security in the embrace of the heavenly Father, of the God who first gave life and continues to give at every moment. Referring to the Word of God, the Roman Pontiff presents many different ways and many different contexts to affirm that God loves them: God speaks of himself as an affectionate father who plays with his children; a mother filled with the visceral love; a lover who writes his beloved on the palm of his hands, to keep her face always before him... He tells the young people that they are so precious and beautiful to God. He does not get upset if they share their questions with Him. God’s love is so real, so true, and so concrete that He invites us to a relationship of openness and fruitful dialogue” (CV 117). The **second great truth is “Christ saves you”**. Holy Father wishes that every young person knows and remembers that “Christ, out of love, sacrificed himself completely in order to save you” (CV 118). The Bible testifies to the saving love of Christ in many ways. The Pope tells young people that Christ saves them today: “the same Christ, who, by his cross, saved us from our sins, today continues to save and redeem us by the power of his total self-surrender”. So we need to allow Christ to save us today; Christ’s love that desires to save us is unconditional and constant; Christ’s love that forgives us, sets us free and saves us is given to us gratuitously. It is free and we must receive it with gratitude and with the joy of being loved unconditionally and immensely (CV 121). Like a good pastor who is passionately concerned about young people, the Pope exhorts, “keep your eyes fixed on the outstretched arms of Christ crucified, let yourself be saved over and over again...contemplate his blood poured out with such great love, and let yourself be cleansed by it. In this way, you can be reborn ever anew” (CV 123).

The **third great truth** which the Roman Pontiff wants young people to know and remember is: “**Christ is alive! He is fully alive! *Christus Vivit***”. For young people, Christ is not a model from a distant past. He is alive today and is with us now! He fills us with his grace, liberates us, transforms us, heals and consoles us here and now. “Because He is alive”, the Pope tells young people, “He can be present in your life at every moment, to fill it with light and to take away all sorrow and solitude. Even if all others depart, he will remain, as he promised”. “I am with you always to the end of the age” (Mt.28:20). He comes to you today and every day, inviting you to set out towards ever new horizons” (CV 125).

After having presented the three great Christian truths about God’s love, Christ who saves and Christ is alive today, the Pope offers his reflection on the **Holy Spirit who is the giver of life** and who is linked to the above three great truths. It is the Spirit who keeps alive our hope of salvation and will help the young people to grow in joy if they are open to his working. Pope Francis, therefore, asks young people to pray constantly to the Spirit, especially to open up to and receive the great message and the great truths of faith. He affirms that the Spirit is able to give to young people genuine love, power and passion (CV 132) and that the Spirit is the source of youth at its best (CV 133). In her circular 992 our Mother General Yvonne Reungoat insists on the importance of openness to the Spirit like Mary of Nazareth, St. Mary Domenica Mazzarello and the first Sisters of our Institute: “on this journey of openness to the Spirit, we meet Mary who let herself be guided by Him, throughout her whole life; from the Annunciation...and in the Cenacle when the Holy Spirit bursts forth at Pentecost. *Everything*

in her is the transparency of the Spirit's presence and unconditional openness to His action” (Cir. No. 992). Are we open to recognize the marvellous works of the Holy Spirit in the history and in our lives and to build generative communities, being daughters, Sisters and Mothers among the young people?

Our father and founder Don Bosco, whose feast we celebrate this month was a great lover of youth and he reflected the unconditional love of God to the numerous young people in the outskirts of Turin. He had an irresistible affection for his young charges because he wanted them to be happy here and in eternity. His very life was a powerful message that proclaimed the above three great truths enumerated by Pope Francis. He used to tell his boys that *he was willing to drag his tongue from Valdocco to Superga to prevent a single grave sin in his houses. Can we say for sure that we are the signs and expressions of God's love for the young people entrusted to our care?*

FEASTS OF THE MONTH

- 01 - Mary, Mother of God
- 05 - The Epiphany of the Lord
- 08 - Bl. Titus Zeman SDB
- 12 - The Baptism of our Lord
- 15 - Bl. Louis Variara SDB
- 16 - St. Joseph Vaz
- 22 - Bl. Laura Vicuna
- 24 - St. Francis De Sales
- 30 - Bl. Bronislao Markiewicz SDB
- 31 - St. John Bosco

ALL IN THE FAMILY

BLESSING OF THE NEW NOVITIATE, NEGOMBO

I am happy to communicate to you that on December 8, 2019, as the FMA INDIA Provincials gracefully concluded their Annual Spiritual Retreat, the new Novitiate Building at Negombo, Sri Lanka was blessed. At 6.00 am there was a house warming ceremony with traditional boiling of milk and at 8.00 am Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva the Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo blessed the building and consecrated the altar in the presence of the seven FMA Provincials, Sri Lanka FMA community Animators and Sisters, SDB Provincial, Vice Provincial and Provincial Economist of Sri Lanka, Episcopal Vicar of Religious and the Parish Priest, Kochchikade, followed by the solemn Eucharistic Celebration. At 11.30 am there was a moment of felicitation during which the candidates performed the cultural programme. Sr. Fernando Mary Ann presented the 10 years journey of FMA Mission Sri Lanka and symbolically handed over the coconut saplings to the six Animators of Sri Lanka, acknowledging and honouring them for their missionary zeal and loving service. I thank Sr. Mary Ann, the Animator and all the community Sisters, candidates, Sr. Mathew Josephine Siriapushpam, the Novice Mistress and the novices for their untiring work that contributed to the success of these memorable events.

CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES

We rejoice that our Rector Major Rev. Fr. Angel Fernandez Artime, has appointed Rev. Fr. Agilan Sarprasadam SDB as the fifth Provincial of the Salesian Province of Annai Velankanni, Tiruchy (INT) on 18 December 2019. He will be installed on 4 January 2020 at

Don Bosco Manikandam, Trichy. We heartily congratulate our dear Fr. Agilan and accompany him with our prayers in his delicate mission.

NEW PCI NATIONAL DELEGATES

We appreciate and thank Sr.Alphonse J.Isabella, the PCI National Development Coordinator (NDF) and Sr.Phawa Theresa (INS), the National delegate for Salesian Family for their generous and valid contribution for the past years and we welcome with joy Sr.Azarias Arockia Mary Selvi (INT) and Sr.Lamare Mary (INS), the newly appointed NDF and delegate for Salesian Family respectively. We wish them good luck for their new mission.

REQUEST FOR PRAYERS

I will be leaving for Rome on the January 5, to participate in the pre-chapter commission work at Casa Generalizia from January 7 to 31, 2020. I request your prayers for my journey and the work in preparation for the GC XXIV. During my absence please contact Sr. Stanislaus Mary Dora, the vice provincial in case of any need.

EDUCATING COMMUNITY MEET 2020

The Educating community, animated by the family spirit, is an effective way to educate our young people. We carry out our educative mission in collaboration with these members and we share our vision and ideals with them through the encounters we have with them, especially during the annual Educating Community Meet. I request the Animators, Headmistresses of all Schools, Educating Community and Youth Pastoral Coordinators to give quality and vitality by your presence and active participation to the zonal level meetings to be held on January 11, 2020, in Chetpet, Chennai zone and Auxilium Home, Katpadi, Vellore zone.

NOTE OF THANKS

- ✚ Expressions of gratitude to Sr. Fernando Mary Ann and the Community of Negombo for hosting the Juniors meet from 10 to 20 December 2019. A special note of thanks to Sr.Doss Rosalia and Sr.Pichai Mary Saroja for animating the Ashram experience for Juniors and Aspirants from 10 to 20, and for novices from 22 to 23 and 26 to 30 December.
- ✚ Our sincere thanks to Sr.Chinnappan Mano Ranjitham and the community of Yercaud for facilitating the NDF Annual Meet from December 12 to 14. Congratulations to Sr.Alphonse J.Isabella, NDF Coordinator and Fr.Joe Xavier SJ, the Consultant for organizing and animating the 24 Sisters from 7 FMA Indian provinces.
- ✚ Heartfelt thanks to Sr.Mariadoss Amala Mary and the community of Auxilium Home Katpadi for hosting the team meet on December 27 and our appreciation to Sr.Alexandar Amali, General Coordinator for organizing the above meet in preparation for the forthcoming zonal level Educating Community meetings.
- ✚ A note of thanks to Sr. Kunnathu Anna and the community of Auxilium College Katpadi for the Workshop of NICT on 28 December in which 57 Sisters participated and congratulations to Sr.Lourdusamy Solomon Kalai the media coordinator for organizing it.
- ✚ Our sincere gratitude to Sr.Susai Josephine Rani and the Community of Pallikonda for conducting the House Staff Retreat on December 29 and 30 with a short outing in which 32 of our house staff participated and received God's abundant blessings and experienced spiritual renewal.

COURSES AND SEMINARS

- Sr.Peddineeni Philomena, Sr.Samuel Gloria Navaneetham and Sr.Varghese Mary Janet will be participating in the **course on “Counseling and Biblical Perspective”** organized by TNBC Commission for Bible at Tindivanam from January 12 to 14, 2020.
- Sr.Fernando Amudha will be attending the XIV Southern Zonal **Conference of Salesian Cooperators** held at Don Bosco, Manikandam, Trichy on January 12 and 13, 2020 on the theme: “Identity of Salesian Cooperators as good Christians and upright citizens”.
- Sr.Augustine Sagaya Rani, Sr.Andrew Roseline and Sr.Anthony Cruz Mathalene Mary will be participating in the **Convention for Young Religious** of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry on January 11, 2020, at Bible Centre - TNBCLC, Tindivanam, on the theme: “Empowered Young Religious to form the youth of today”.
- The following six Sisters will be participating in the **Peace Convention** at Bangalore from January 30 to February 1, 2020: Sr.Sebastian Vimala, Sr.Sebastian Elizabeth, Sr. Joseph Victoria, Sr.Fernando Amutha, Sr.Francis Jayamani and Sr.Chinnappan Gracy Fatima.

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

Our loving prayers and condolences to all those who lost their dear ones during the last month:

- ✠ To the Provincial and the confreres of the Salesian Province of Shillong at the demise of Fr. Paul Vadakumpadan (66) on November 18, 2019.
- ✠ To Sr.Rose Ezareth and the Sisters of Calcutta Province at the passing away of Sr.Alice Olickal (80) on November 30, 2019.
- ✠ To Sr.Ritha Dora and the Sisters of Mumbai Province, to Sr. Pilar Ruth and the Sisters of AES Province at the demise of Sr.Celine (Eliama) on December 1, 2019.
- ✠ To Sr.Amalanathan Mary Margaret and the Sisters of Trichy Province at the loss of our dear Sr.Asirvatham Amalorpavam (63) on December 19, 2019.

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY - JANUARY 2020

- 03 † Sr. Appiano Clotilde (1968)
- 14 † Sr. Villa Teresa (1989)
- 24 † Sr. Mania Caterina (1983)
- † Sr. Muthusamy Rosary (2018)

UPCOMING EVENTS - JANUARY 2020

- 04 : Headmistress' Meet, St.Mary's Vellore
- 07&08 : Submission of House Accounts, Kodambakkam
- 11 : EC Meet, Chetpet/ Auxilium Home
- 18-20 : Life Skill Education, Mannivakkam
- 19 : Youth Core Team Meet, Kodambakkam
- 25 : VIDES General Body Meet, Auxilium Home, Katpadi
- 26 : Past Pupils' Meet, Local communities
- 31 : Renewal of the Promise by Sal. Co-operators, Local communities
- 01 Feb.: Tri-monthly Recollection for Seniors, Sacred Heart Home / Yercaud / Negombo

- 02 : Tri-monthly Recollection for Seniors, Tirupattur
- 07 : Quiz on Acts of the Apostles, Local Communities
- 07&08 : Tri-monthly Recollection and Animation for Juniors, Sri Lanka
- 08 : Past Pupils Evaluation Meet, Polur
- 08&09 : Tri-monthly Recollection and Animation for Juniors, Kodambakkam

Fr. Ángel Artime Fernandez, our beloved Rector Major of the big Salesian Family has given us the beautiful Strenna 2020: **“Your will be done, on earth, as it is in Heaven”** (Mt. 6:10) **“GOOD CHRISTIANS AND UPRIGHT CITIZENS”**. Re-assuming the mission of *forming ourselves and forming* "good Christians and honest citizens" according to the dream of God and that of Don Bosco in the concreteness of daily life requires us to consolidate our identity as apostles and evangelizers in the spirit of *da mihi animas cetera tolle*, restoring to young people the task that belongs to them: to be active protagonists of a new humanity (M.G. Cir. No. 993). To form honest citizens means to educate the young to responsible citizenship and social involvement. *“At the basis of the Our Father, there is the ‘politics of justice, of solidarity, of reconciliation, of respect, of equality, and of the protection of the most vulnerable.’”*

During this month we celebrate the sanctity of Bl. Laura Vicuna, the model of a life of love and sacrifice for the young people, Bl. Titus Zeman SDB, Bl. Louis Variara SDB, Bl. Bronislao Markiewicz SDB, St. Francis De Sales and St. John Bosco. St. Francis De Sales whom our Founder chose as a patron and model of our congregation is well known for his writings on the topic of spiritual direction and formation, particularly the ‘Introduction to the Devout Life’ and the ‘Treatise on the Love of God’. Let us remind ourselves of the famous saying of this great saint on loving-kindness, **“A spoon full of honey gets more flies than a barrel full of vinegar”** and express the same in our daily lives so that every person who meets us can experience the goodness and gentleness of God our father and mother.

As our Church in Tamil Nadu has declared this year as the year of youth, may St. John Bosco, the apostle of the young, renew the Salesian charismatic strength to our personal and community life through a decisive pastoral conversion, open to horizons of hope, lived with joy, capable of radiating light where darkness tries to obscure the beauty of life.

I wish each one of you, young people, members of the Salesian family and educating community, a very Happy Feast of

St. Francis De Sales

Bl. Laura Vicuna &

St. John Bosco !

Yours affectionately,

Sr. Nirmala Lazar
Sr. Nirmala Lazar FMA
Provincial



